

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method comprising the steps of:

when retrieval based on an input retrieval keyword is performed by accessing an electronic-program-guide database storing electronic-program-guide data,

extracting relevant-keyword information relevant to said input retrieval keyword from a dictionary database; and

extracting necessary electronic-program-guide data based on the extracted relevant-keyword information from the electronic-program-guide data stored in said electronic-program-guide database.

2. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 1, wherein said dictionary database stores words to be used as retrieval keywords, and relevant keywords relevant to said words to be used as retrieval keywords.

3. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 1, wherein when the retrieval keyword is the name of a person, the relevant-keyword information is one of or a combination of a nickname of said person, the full name of said person, the given name of said person, the

name of a group relevant to said person, and another well-known name of said person.

4. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 1, wherein when the retrieval keyword is a word written in hiragana characters and/or katakana characters used in Japanese writing, the relevant-keyword information includes a word written in kanji characters used in Japanese writing or in characters relevant to said kanji characters.

5. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 1, wherein when the retrieval keyword corresponds to one of misused character keywords stored in a misused keyword database which are caused by possible input mistakes, only the relevant-keyword information is used to perform retrieval.

6. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 1, wherein the retrieval keyword and the relevant-keyword information are interrelated to each other.

7. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 1, wherein when part of a word to be used as the retrieval keyword is input, said word to be used as

the retrieval keyword and the relevant-keyword information are extracted from a retrieval-keyword database storing previously input keywords in a predetermined order.

8. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 1, wherein when the retrieval keyword belongs to a particular genre, the relevant-keyword information belongs to a genre different from said particular genre.

9. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 8, wherein when the particular genre is relevant to cooking, the different genre is relevant to cooks.

10. An electronic-program-guide retrieval method according to Claim 8, wherein when the particular genre is relevant to place names, the different genre is relevant to one of or a combination of neighboring city names, country names, and regional names.

11. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system comprising:

a data server including an electronic-program-guide database storing program information of an electronic

program guide;

a client comprising access means for accessing said electronic-program-guide database and input means for inputting a retrieval keyword for retrieving the program information; and

a dictionary database for storing retrieval keywords and relevant keywords relevant to said retrieval keywords;

wherein relevant-keyword information relevant to the retrieval keyword input by said client is extracted from said dictionary database, and retrieval by accessing the program information is performed based on the extracted relevant-keyword information and the input retrieval keyword.

12. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein said dictionary database is provided at the client side.

13. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein said dictionary database is provided at the data server side.

14. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein said client downloads and stores the program information.

15. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein said client accesses a necessary part of said data server via a routing server storing information on routes to the parts of said data server.

16. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein:

said dictionary database stores misused keywords caused by possible input mistakes; and

when the input keyword corresponds to one of the misused keywords, only the relevant-keyword information is used to perform retrieval.

17. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein when the retrieval keyword is a word written in hiragana characters and/or katakana characters used in Japanese writing, the relevant-keyword information includes a word written in kanji characters used in Japanese writing or in characters relevant to said kanji characters.

18. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein said dictionary database stores previously input keywords so that the input keywords

are included in the relevant-keyword information, and the stored keywords are arranged in order of frequency of use.

19. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein the program information includes data relevant to movie information.

20. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein the program information includes data relevant to drama information.

21. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein the program information includes data relevant to place names.

22. An electronic-program-guide retrieval system according to Claim 11, wherein the program information includes data relevant to the names of dishes.